

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A post cladding element, comprising:  
2 a one-piece elongated tubular flexible body having first and second opposing  
3 longitudinal edges and a continuous seam closure formed along said body and defined at  
4 said first and second opposing longitudinal edges of said flexible body, whereby a post  
5 may be clad by flexing said body to open said seam closure a sufficient width to dispose  
6 said flexible body around said post.
- 1 2. The post cladding element of claim 1, wherein said seam closure comprises a  
2 female connector and a male connector disposed to mate with each other, whereby said  
3 opposing longitudinal edges are mated.
- 1 3. The post cladding element of claim 2,  
2 wherein an outer surface of said flexible body includes an ornamental  
3 configuration, and  
4 wherein said male and female connectors cooperate to camouflage or hide said  
5 seam closure into said ornamental configuration.
- 1 4. The post cladding element of claim 2, wherein said male and female connectors  
2 include a retention latch or barb.
- 1 5. The post cladding element of claim 1, wherein said tubular flexible body  
2 comprises PVC.
- 1 6. The post cladding element of claim 1, wherein an opening formed with said width  
2 is at least about the length of the smallest interior dimension of said post cladding  
3 element when said continuous seam closure is fully closed.
- 1 7. The post cladding element of claim 1, wherein an opening formed with said width  
2 is less than the length of the smallest interior dimension of said post cladding element  
3 when said continuous seam closure is fully closed, whereby said flexible body is slipped  
4 over said post from a top or bottom end of said post.
- 1 8. A method of cladding a post, comprising the following steps:

2 providing a one-piece elongated tubular flexible body having first and second  
3 opposing longitudinal edges and a continuous seam closure formed along said body and  
4 defined at said first and second opposing longitudinal edges of said flexible body; and  
5 flexing said body to open said seam closure a sufficient width to permit disposal  
6 of said body completely around said post.

1 9. The method of claim 8, wherein said seam closure includes a female connector  
2 and a male connector disposed to mate with each other, said method further comprising  
3 the step of mating said female and male connectors after said flexing step to mate said  
4 opposing longitudinal edges.

1 10. The method of claim 9,  
2 wherein an outer surface of said flexible body includes an ornamental  
3 configuration, and  
4 wherein said male and female connectors cooperate to camouflage or hide said  
5 seam closure into said ornamental configuration.

1 11. The method of claim 10, further comprising the step of disposing a plurality of  
2 fasteners through a portion of said female connector and into said post, wherein said male  
3 connector is disposed to cover said fasteners.

1 12. The method of claim 8, further comprising the step of applying a decorative  
2 molding proximate to a top or bottom portion of said body.

1 13. The method of claim 8, wherein said post is a pre-installed post.

1 14. The method of claim 9, wherein an opening formed during said flexing step with  
2 said width is at least about the length of the smallest interior dimension of said post  
3 cladding element when said continuous seam closure is fully closed.

1 15. The method of claim 8, wherein an opening formed during said flexing step with  
2 said width is less than the length of the smallest interior dimension of said post cladding  
3 element when said continuous seam closure is fully closed, wherein said flexible body is  
4 slipped over said post from a top or bottom end of said post.

1 16. A method of forming a cladding element comprising the steps of:  
2 extruding an elongated tubular flexible body, said flexible body having a male  
3 connector and a female connector formed integrally therewith and connected to each  
4 other by an integral linking portion;  
5 cutting said linking portion to form a post cladding element having first and  
6 second opposing longitudinal edges and a continuous seam closure formed longitudinally  
7 along said body and defined at said first and second opposing longitudinal edges of said  
8 flexible body, said longitudinal edges including said male connector and female  
9 connector, which are freed by said cutting step, and  
10 whereby a post may be clad by flexing said body to open said seam closure a  
11 sufficient width to dispose said flexible body around said post.

1 17. The method of claim 16,  
2 wherein an outer surface of said flexible body includes an ornamental  
3 configuration, and  
4 wherein said male and female connectors cooperate to camouflage or hide said  
5 seam closure into said ornamental configuration.

1 18. The method of claim 16, wherein said cutting step includes the step of removing  
2 said linking portion.

1 19. The method of claim 16, wherein said cutting step is in-line with an extrusion  
2 process including said extruding step.

1 20. The method of claim 16, wherein said cutting step is performed during installation  
2 of said cladding element.

1 21. A post cladding element comprising:  
2 an elongated tubular flexible body, said flexible body having a male connector  
3 and a female connector formed integrally therewith and connected to each other by an  
4 integral linking portion, wherein cutting said linking portion forms a post cladding  
5 element having first and second opposing longitudinal edges and a continuous seam  
6 closure formed longitudinally along said body and defined at said first and second

7 opposing longitudinal edges of said flexible body, said longitudinal edges including said  
8 male connector and female connector, which are freed by cutting said linking portion,  
9 whereby a post may be clad by flexing said body to open said seam closure a sufficient  
10 width to dispose said flexible body around said post.